



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

LATE

February 5, 2016

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

House Bill 2554 – Relating to American Sign Language

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2554 – Relating to American Sign Language. The purpose of this bill is to establish and designate American Sign Language (ASL) as an official foreign language in Hawaii by adding a new section to Chapter 5 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

There are various definitions for what constitutes a foreign language, such as “a language from another country,” or “a language other than one’s own” from the Oxford’s Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. Although it may appear unusual to consider ASL a foreign language, it does have its own grammatical structure and syntax that differs from English. It is also the fourth most popular language in colleges and universities in the United States, but is not recognized as a foreign language in Hawaii.

This bill will recognize ASL as an official foreign language in the state, but goes no further. A similar measure Senate Bill 2981 - Relating to Education was introduced in the Senate. Senate Bill 2981 will recognize ASL as a foreign language and allow public schools to offer ASL as a foreign language and add it to school curricula. A student may then take and pass courses in ASL and receive credit for those courses that will then satisfy foreign language requirements.

Including ASL as a foreign language as well as Deaf culture to our own cultural understanding in the state, will enrich the educational experience of Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing students in Hawaii public schools. Being able to learn ASL will assist to increase the number of ASL/English interpreters available in Hawaii and enhance the identities of Deaf and hard of hearing students who use ASL on a daily basis.

We request your consideration to amend the bill to mirror the language in Senate Bill 2981.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

for FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

LATE

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FW: hb2554

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is (Your Name) is Philip Ana and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today. Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation." This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Name Philip Ana here
City, State Honolulu Hawaii

Sincerely,
Philip Ana
Long Term Care Disability Specialist
Executive Office on Aging
250 S. Hotel St #406
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-7289

February 3, 2016

Testimony by Billy Kekua, President

Aloha State Association of the Deaf

www.deafaloha.org

Support for HB2554 Relating to American Sign Language
American Sign Language; Official Foreign Language of the State

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair

Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Rhoads and committee members,

We, the Association, would like to commit and uphold our Mission Statement. Two of the objectives are significant to the Bill and we would like to share this with you:

- Advocating the educational and civil rights of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind (DHHDB) citizens in the State of Hawai'i.
- Improving the quality and standard of living for all DHHDB people.

The majority of our membership heavily use the American Sign Language (ASL) as the way of life to communicate with family, friends, and everyone in the society. Often times we depend on interpreters to facilitate the communication in many areas such as workplaces, appointments, entertainment/events, and others. Thus, we feel that ASL should be included in the curriculum to satisfy the foreign language requirement.

It will be a great opportunity for all students (I mean all - hearing, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and everyone) should benefit from learning ASL. There are plethora of job opportunities can be a life-saving experience for everyone if they can communicate in ASL with DHHDB consumers. Interpreters, doctors, teachers, business owners, and many... The healthy society should be like this - everyone can enjoy their beautiful lives in ease and peace.

With the reasons presented in this letter, we respectfully request that the bill is to be passed. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to present our testimony with you.

Malama pono.

HB 2727 ASL as a foreign language. TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2727 passed the first reading on the House floor. On behalf Maui Deaf Friends, the voice of the Deaf Community on Maui Hawaii, I urge you to lend support to HB 2727 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2727 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2727 enforces schools, hospitals, and the general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the university level. Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including University courses for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Lack of recognition that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Please support HB 2727 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Maui Deaf Friends

Vesta Morris

Director

Jeff Morris

Treasurer

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 5:26 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: canthecant@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2554 on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM*

HB2554

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for JUD on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaimi Seminara	Hawaii Deaf Surfriders Association	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Friday, February 5, 2016 at 2:00 P.M. Conference Room 325
HOUSE BILL NO. 2554 RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN
LANGUAGE

Aloha from Kentucky!

Chair Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice-Chair Rep. Joy San Beunaventura, Members of Judiciary, and Friends,

My name is Francine Mae Kenyon from Stanford, KY. You know, I miss advocating down in Hawaii but will continue advocating for deaf rights up there in Kentucky next year.

I strongly support the House Bill No. 2554, recognizing American Sign Language as the official foreign language in the state of Hawaii because of the important reasons: (1) Foreign languages rarely used in the state; (2) Sign Language Interpreters; and (3) Deaf students in public or private schools.

Back in 1963 in Kaimuki High School, I had a difficult situation with my Latin teacher who refused to let me take the second year of Latin as required for the graduation. Thanks to my advisor to waive the foreign language requirement for my graduation.

As a matter of fact, not only Hawaiian language but I also took three years of French at Gallaudet University, the world's only university for the deaf and hard of hearing, three years of Biblical Hebrew and three years of Greek at Wesley Theological Seminary as well as spoken and written Japanese language and Japanese Sign Language at Kaimuki Adult Night School.

My daughter-in-law took American Sign Language as a substitute for foreign language at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt, Maryland.

I am amazed and surprised when a few people at the workplaces communicate with me in sign language when I need assistance because Kentucky School for the Deaf is located in Danville!

I firmly support in favor of HB5442, recognizing American Sign Language as an official foreign language that will be more beneficial and credible!

Respectfully,

Francine Mae Lehuanani Kenyon
374 Tanner Circle
Stanford, KY 40484
(808)375-9007 Text
kuliangel569@gmail.com

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads,
Chair Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Kelli Anne Ganeku and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, handshape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL coursework at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation." This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kelli Anne N. Ganeku

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Bachelor School of Social Work

President, Bachelor of Social Work Organization

Honolulu, Hawaii; 96817

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Kekai Kaaumoana-Cummings. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
- 4) ASL is a beautiful language. The more languages you learn, the opportunities will be increased such as supporting the economy, language learning for the Deaf, linguistic creativity will encourage people to express their thoughts in poetry, play, storytelling, and many more.
- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kekai Kaaumoana-Cummings', written over a horizontal line.

Kekai Kaaumoana-Cummings,
Waimea, Kauai

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Arwin Sacalamitao. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
- 4) ASL is a beautiful language. The more languages you learn, the opportunities will be increased such as supporting the economy, language learning for the Deaf, linguistic creativity will encourage people to express their thoughts in poetry, play, storytelling, and many more.
- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arwin Sacalamitao', written over a horizontal line.

Arwin Sacalamitao
Kalihi, Oahu

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Brooke Christophersen-Urayanza. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brooke Urayanza". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brooke Christophersen-Urayanza
Wailuku, Maui

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

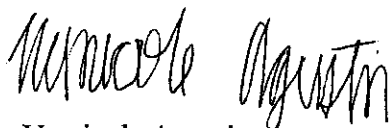
Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Vernicole Agustin. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vernicole Agustin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vernicole Agustin
Kalihi, Oahu

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Billy Rayray. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Billy Rayray', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Billy Rayray.
Kalihi, Oahu

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

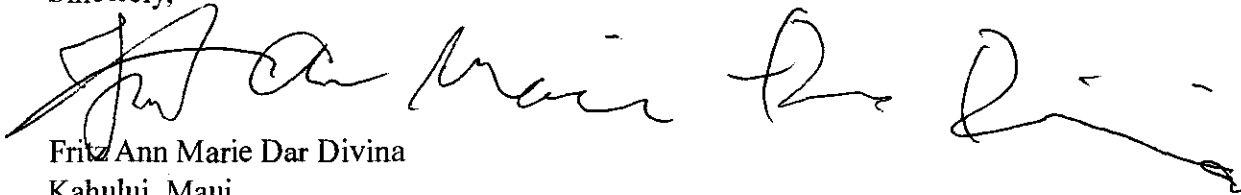
Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Fritz Ann Marie Dar Divina. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Fritz Ann Marie Dar Divina
Kahului, Maui

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

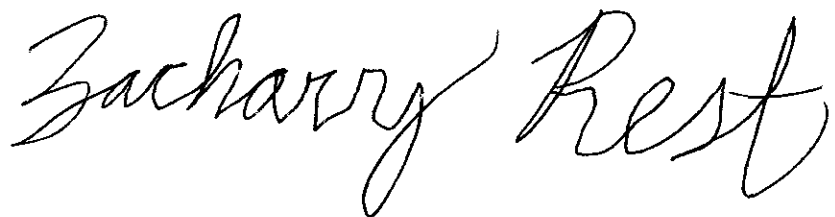
My name is Zachary Rest. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Zachary Rest
Kalihi, Oahu

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Rest". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary


Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Mariah Dawn Ralar Punzalan. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
- 4) ASL is a beautiful language. The more languages you learn, the opportunities will be increased such as supporting the economy, language learning for the Deaf, linguistic creativity will encourage people to express their thoughts in poetry, play, storytelling, and many more.
- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariah Dawn Ralar Punzalan', written in a cursive style.

Mariah Dawn Ralar Punzalan
Kahului, Maui

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Henny Basilio. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Henny Basilio
Aiea, Oahu

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henny Basilio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Clyde Custodio. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
- 3) Future interpreters will be important because of the accessibility for everyone including Deaf people and hearing consumers (i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others)
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Clyde Custodio
Kapaa, Kauai

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is PJ Billimon. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
- 2) Opportunities for all students to take the language and eventually study in the field of interpreting.
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- 5) The knowledge of sign language can be useful in various situations with firefighters, police officers, doctors, bank tellers, cashiers, and many more.

There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

PJ Billimon
Kalihi, Oahu

February 4, 2016

HB2554 Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

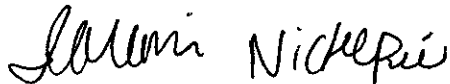
Dear Chair Rhoads,

My name is Iolani Nickepwi. My first language is American Sign Language (ASL). I believe that the requirement for ASL to be included in the curriculum is the best approach because it will help us in many ways. For example:

- 1) Hearing students can learn American Sign Language and use it for daily communication with Deaf people.
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There are many more reasons I would like to share with you however I cherish your time reading this, so I ask of you to pass this bill. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iolani Nickepwi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Iolani" written in a larger, more stylized script than the last name "Nickepwi".

Iolani Nickepwi
Kalihi, Oahu

HB 2554 American Sign Language ASL as a foreign language.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON Judiciary

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

On behalf of myself, a hard of hearing sophomore attending Maui High School, I urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

I was born hard of hearing. Luckily my parents put me in a pre-school in Wailuku Elem that had a fluent ASL teacher of the Deaf. She taught me ASL language so that I could understand what people are saying. Later, I learned to talk for myself, but I am still Deaf. At age 14 I lost all my hearing. I became profoundly deaf. I got cochlear implants surgery. I can hear, but I can not hear speech to understand everything. I need an ASL interpreter with me during my classes. My auditory training is getting better, but I don't hear what hearing people hear even with cochlear implant surgery. Many hearing students at this school want to take ASL as a foreign language, but our State does not recognize that it is a different language. I support Hawaii Deaf Community! I need your help.

I think of myself as bilingual, both ASL and English. I know how to read printed English, and I can read lips a little 30%. sometimes more sometimes less depends what is being said and if the person is familiar or not to me. But I understand and sometimes use another language called American sign Language. It is different from English. It is easier for me to understand ASL. I hope Hawaii can make me proud and let the hearing world know that I am bilingual. I study and work hard to learn two different languages and this makes me proud. Please vote yes to HB 2554.

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Chantal Sandoval

Sophomore

Maui

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Michelle Troxel and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Michelle Troxel
Honolulu, Hawaii

February 3, 2016 HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street Honolulu,
Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is **Katrell Plunkett** and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Katrell Plunkett
Laie, Hawaii

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Kerryn Sagucio and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kerryn Sagucio
Ewa, Hawaii

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Cathie Collier and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Cathie Collier
Aiea, Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 6:51 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: echiwa@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2554 on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM*

HB2554

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for JUD on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eileen Chiwa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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February 4, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Gail Odagiri and I live in Hawaii. Please support HB 2554 and vote in favor for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non-manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Deaf-Blind (DHHDB) infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation." This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Gail Odagiri
99-771 Nahiolea Street
Aiea, HI 96701

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Kurstin Chun and I live in Aiea, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today. Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation." This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kurstin Chun
Aiea, Hawaii

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Culden Arroyo and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Culten Arroyo

Honolulu, Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 8:39 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: drlucy@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2554 on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM

HB2554

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for JUD on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lucy Miller	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am strongly in favor of recognizing ASL as an official separate language which is transmitted visually for persons who are deaf, as well as some who have autism.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 5:16 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: canthecant@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2554 on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM*

HB2554

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for JUD on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Darlene Ewan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Larry Littleton and I live in Hawaii. I work as a professional Sign Language Interpreter. I urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language.

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Larry Littleton
Lihue, HI.

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is (Your Name) and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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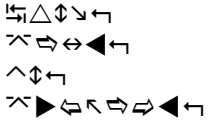
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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Name here
City, State



sanbuenaventura2 - Valerie
Thursday, February 04, 2016 9:01 AM
JUDtestimony
Testimony for HB2554

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Heather Benjamin and I live in Hawaii. I urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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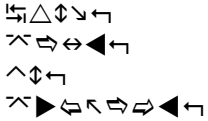
toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Heather Benjamin
Honolulu, HI



sanbuenaventura2 - Valerie
Thursday, February 04, 2016 9:01 AM
JUDtestimony
HB 2554 Testimony for American Sign Language

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Kammi Koza and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today . Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions . "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

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or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kammi Koza
Pearl City, HI

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Terri Mehlhorn and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Terri Mehlhorn
Aiea, Hawaii

February 4, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is, Keri Lee and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today. Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Keri Lee

Laie, HI

February 4, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Peggy Liang and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non-manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Peggy Liang
Honolulu, Hawaii

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Kian Guan Au and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non-manual markers.

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citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kian Guan Au
Honolulu, HI

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is **Kaitlin Broyles** and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Broyles
Laie, HI

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is LisaAnn Tom and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non-manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "LisaAnn Tom".

LisaAnn Tom

Honolulu, HI

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Rovelyn Hermoso and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Rovelyn Hermoso
Waipahu, Hawaii

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Norma Hale and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Norma Hale
Honolulu, Hawaii

LATE

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Malia Gonsalves and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Malia Gonsalves
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

February 4, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is, Keri Lee and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Keri Lee

Laie, HI

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Stephanie Steinle-Balding and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

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HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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The lack of recognition leads to a misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation.” This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Steinlein-Balding

Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Dina Dela Pena and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Dina Dela Pena
Waipahu, HI

LATE



Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Peter Balding III and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Peter Balding III
Honolulu, Hawaii



LATE

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February 4, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair

Chair, House Committee on Judiciary

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Eric Folk and I live in Hawaii, and I urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawai'i can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language.

HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non-manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Eric Folk

Honolulu, Hawaii

(808) 372-8220

ericmanoa@gmail.com

LATE



February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Cathy Ferreira and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Cathy Ferreira



LATE



Aloha,

My name is Charis Shimizu. I am 19 years old. I am a college student at Kapiolani Community College where I learn American Sign Language. Growing up "hearing," I never gave much thought to the Deaf community or the language. I always assumed since the majority of colleges do not recognize ASL as a foreign language, it is not. I could not be more wrong. The definition of language by Merriam-Webster is "the system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other." American Sign Language is a system that is acknowledged by the Deaf community as their way of communicating. We, as hearing people, associate foreign languages with a spoken language and a place where it originates. Rarely do we look beyond that. If you went to a Deaf event or learn about Deaf culture, you would see it is very much indeed a foreign language. Sign language is the form of communication for those who do not have hearing or are hard of hearing. Similar to spoken languages, different countries have their own signed language. Japan has Japanese Sign Language. France has French Sign Language. Like the spoken languages, ASL is the universal language of the deaf. I humbly ask that you vote on my behalf in favor of recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language in Hawaii. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Charis Shimizu



LATE



Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Albert Marsh and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Albert Marsh
Makakilo, HI

JAN L. FRIED • American Sign Language/English Interpreter

• RID Certified-IC, CI, CT • Educator • Consultant •

04 February 16

LATE

Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, 2016

To: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

Fr.: Jan Fried

Re: Support, *with Comments*, for **HB 2554, Relating to American Sign Language** (Hearing on HB 2554; 05 February 2016; 2:00pm, Conference Room 325)

Aloha. I write this testimony in support of **HB 2554** from the perspective of being a longtime ally of the Deaf Community, a professional American Sign Language/English interpreter, the president of the Hawai'i Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, an interpreter educator who prepares college students to become American Sign Language/English interpreters, and an American Sign Language instructor. I am well aware of how important it is for American Sign Language (ASL) to be officially recognized by the State as a distinct language.

Official recognition of ASL has several benefits. It promotes awareness that ASL is a complete and linguistically complex language—K-12 institutions may be more willing to include ASL in their World Languages offerings if it receives this designation. Deaf and hearing children would then have the opportunity to study ASL no matter where they went to school. HB 2554 could even be seen as a companion to another bill, HB 1780 that was also introduced this session because early language acquisition is critical for all children. HB 1780 asks the state to make a plan to ensure Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-Blind children are language ready by the time they enter kindergarten. Recognizing ASL could make this initiative easier and result in ASL becoming more readily available to very young children and allow them broader access to it throughout their entire educational experience. Deaf people are not the only ones who use ASL. Children who can hear benefit from being exposed to ASL as are children with cognitive and other disabilities. ASL provides another language option for communication.

The intention of the bill is worthwhile, however I disagree with referring to ASL as a *foreign* language. It is a non-English language that is used and valued by numerous Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-Blind Americans, and their non-Deaf families, colleagues and friends. In high schools, colleges and universities throughout the United States, ASL is extremely popular and countless reports list it as the 3rd or 4th most studied language. ASL is the "power" sign language in the world (as English is the "power" spoken language internationally) and is often the second sign language Deaf people in other countries learn after mastering their own indigenous or national sign language—to them ASL is indeed a "foreign" language. In 1995, the University of Hawai'i system recognized ASL as one of the languages that satisfies the Second/Foreign Language requirement for graduation. It has since changed that graduation designation to "American Sign/Hawaiian/Foreign Language" to ensure that both the Hawaiian language, as one of the State's official languages, and American Sign Language, a sign language unique to the US, are valued and worthy of study as other languages, but are not *foreign*.

With minor modification, I urge you to support the intent of this bill. *Mahalo.*

707 18th Avenue • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96816 • Cellphone: 808.295.0645
Videophone: 808.447.3141 • Fax: 808.734.9893 • email: janfried@gmail.com

LATE

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is **Anna Hadley** and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Anna Hadley
Laie, Hawaii

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 7:31 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: krispagano@mac.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2554 on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM

HB2554

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for JUD on Feb 5, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kristine Pagano	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Born deaf, attended public schools and received speech therapy for sixteen years, I was lost in understanding oral communication and learned American Sign Language (ASL) in college. ASL saved my life, I had access to oral communication through sign language interpreters and connected with the Deaf community. ASL is a language with its own grammatical structure and evolves as any other spoken language. Please support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

LATE



Hi. My name is Roberta Chiwa-Tanaka. I am living in Oahu. I am deaf. I am writing testimony for supporting HB2554.

The article above from the Reader's Digest. Imagine persons learn sign language....they can help persons with skills in sign language to communicate with persons with little knowledge in sign language or none in any situation but most important in emergencies.

Persons learn sign language. It can help them develop better relationship with their family members with hearing loss. Sign language can be beneficial for persons with vocal loss. Sign language is great in skindiving and noisy jobs and place with "Quiet" sign and long distance between persons in communicating to each other and through window.

I strongly support HB2554.

Mahalo.

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy Tab® 3, an AT&T 4G LTE tablet



The Preteen Translator

BY ALYSSA JUNG

ON A COLD AFTERNOON in January 2015, Yesenia Diosdado, 11, got off a school bus in Lenexa, Kansas, near the apartment building where she lives with her family. When the bus pulled away, Yesenia saw police and emergency workers attending to victims of a three-car accident that had occurred at a busy intersection nearby. Yesenia joined a small crowd of onlookers across the street.

She noticed that an injured woman was trying to communicate with an EMS worker using sign language, but he couldn't understand her. "I heard him ask for an interpreter," Yesenia says.

She ran over to the paramedic to help—her mother, a former sign language interpreter, had taught her and her siblings how to sign (no one in the family is hearing impaired).

"She said, 'I sign. Can I help?'" says EMS captain Chris Winger. "I was floored."

Yesenia was able to relay to the emergency personnel that the woman's neck was injured and tell them the name of the local hospital she preferred. "She looked really hurt," says Yesenia. "I'm proud



Yesenia Diosdado knows dozens of phrases in American Sign Language.

that I got to do something to help."

When her mother, Susan Milidore, 36, heard about Yesenia's heroics, she wasn't surprised. "It's in her nature to help," says Susan. "I was impressed that she recognized the seriousness of the situation and took charge. Most adults wouldn't have done that."

A few weeks later, paramedics presented Yesenia with a gold coin and a certificate of appreciation at her elementary school.

"My mom always says that you never know when sign language might come in handy," says Yesenia. "That day, it did."

R

COURTESY SUSAN MILIDORE

LATE

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Christine Holmes and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Christine Holmes

Christine Holmes
Honolulu, Hawaii

February 3, 2016

HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

LATE TESTIMONY

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Hercules and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language! I am a son of two Deaf parents. Many people are very ignorant, and stupefied when they discover that my first language is English, and that I am a child of two Deaf adults. They think that my parents are 'dumb' or somehow that my first language was taught to me through a class. When in common sense... your first language is when someone teaches you. This lack of awareness, understanding, exposure, and everything culminates in accepting that ASL is infact, the concept of another language. ASL just uses English as a base. Just as much how script languages for romantic languages utilize mainly the same alphabet in a way.

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has it's own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

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Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Hercules Goss-Kuehn

Makakilo, O'ahu

LATE

February 3, 2016
HB 2554 TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads:

As you know, House Bill 2554 passed the first reading on the House floor. My name is Jonah Carino and I live in Hawaii, we urge you to lend support to HB 2554 and vote for it so that Hawaii can join other states in recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language!

Basically, HB 2554 requires the state's Department of Judiciary to recognize that American Sign Language (ASL) is a separate language from spoken and/or printed English. ASL has its own semantics, pragmatics, syntax, hand-shape classifiers and non manual markers.

HB 2554 allows schools, hospitals, and the larger general public to honor ASL as a natural language of the Deaf community and available to be studied and mastered within the benchmarks presented in educational settings under the category of World Languages.

ASL is the 4th most highly chosen foreign language course offered at the University level today. Many states have acknowledged it as a foreign language years ago, and now offer ASL in all levels of educational institutions. "Baby" sign language classes that allow parents of newborn hearing children also seek classes to master this language in order to give their child a head start on language skill. I support this bill because I want our state to take the first step towards obtaining "Deaf Awareness" including the fact that ASL is a complete language used by a linguistic minority, much like Hawaiian language is used by a linguistic minority group, the Hawaiian Community.

The lack of recognition leads to misunderstandings regarding language rights at all State levels, through practices of not hiring ASL interpreters, not providing ASL as a foreign language curriculum in various educational settings, including not offering or accepting ASL course work at the University level for credit, and not offering opportunities to hire the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population who may be fluent in this language. Furthermore, the lack of awareness that ASL is in fact a foreign language leads to language deprivation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens that is not addressed by the various professionals working with DHHDB infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Signing in English order is not American Sign Language, and this clarification is essential to the community who study, teach and use this visual language.

Last August, in New Jersey, Bill S 1760 required high schools to let students fulfill their foreign language graduation requirement by taking sign language courses instead of spoken languages like Spanish and French. According to their legislation, ASL shall be recognized as a world language for the purpose of meeting any state or local world language requirements for high school graduation." This is the step we must take for Hawaii! It's Pono!

Please support HB 2554 and recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language accessible to all in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Jonah Carino
Honolulu, Hawaii